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The U.S. Military Presence in a Changing Southern Region: Issues and Options

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Prepared for the
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Director of Net Assessment,
Office of the Secretary of Defense

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PREFACE

This Note explores issues and options related to the basing of U.S. and allied forces in NATO's Southern Region, against the background of a changing strategic environment in Europe and around the Mediterranean. It is a brief "issue paper," designed to elicit comment and further debate, and should not be regarded as a comprehensive survey of Southern Region security problems or a definitive assessment of policy options. The rapid pace of events around the Mediterranean inevitably raises problems of obsolescence for a document of this sort, particularly in relation to specific issues and options. It is hoped that the broader observations and analysis will continue to remain relevant.

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SUMMARY

Two broad developments argue for greater attention to security in NATO's Southern Region—Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, and Turkey—and the Mediterranean as a whole.[1] First, as the direct Soviet threat to Europe evaporates, a range of formerly peripheral concerns have come to the fore. This is not simply a question of relative priorities, but a reflection of new risks flowing from political, demographic, and proliferation trends around the Mediterranean. New approaches to maintaining and bolstering allied capabilities in the Southern Region will help to ensure that the residual U.S. presence in Europe is relevant to emerging European security concerns. Second, recent experience in the Persian Gulf has focused attention on Turkey's unique strategic position and problems. It is likely that scenarios involving the reassurance and reinforcement of Turkey will play an increasingly central role in U.S. and Allied planning.

THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT IN THE SOUTHERN REGION

Key elements of change relevant to U.S. strategy and planning for the Southern Region include the following:

- The growing perception of a threat from the south, flowing from the expansion of fundamentalism in North Africa and the growth of conventional and unconventional arsenals along the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean.
- The existence of large military arsenals outside the CFE framework, and the relative proximity to Turkey of Soviet (or former Soviet) forces behind the Urals, means that the link between arms control and increased security is least automatic in the Southern Region.
- As the Southern Region countries (with the exception of Turkey) become more European in their outlook and behavior, it will become more difficult for the United States to rely on bilateral cooperation in crises outside the NATO area.
- Across the region, there is a strong movement toward the modernization of armed forces, together with a general reorientation of strategy and missions southward.

[1]France, a Mediterranean country of considerable importance, is not included in this discussion because it is not normally regarded as part of NATO's Southern Region.

REGIONAL CONTINGENCIES

Political and strategic developments point toward an "expanding" Southern Region, with possible contingencies stretching from the Atlantic approaches to the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf. Potential Mediterranean scenarios requiring a U.S. military response, ranging from small peacekeeping or humanitarian assistance operations to large-scale intervention include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A renewed "eastern" threat to the Southern Region, possibly as a result of instability in the southern Soviet republics affecting Turkey.
- Regional aggression against Turkey (i.e., conflict with Syria, Iran, or Iraq).
- Conflict between Greece and Turkey, possibly centered on Cyprus or Thrace.
- Instability or conflict in the Balkans.
- Defense of the Suez Canal.
- Instability or conflict involving North Africa.
- A Moroccan threat to the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla.

OPTIONS FOR SOUTHERN REGION BASING AND FORCES

The following are offered as options for consideration in relation to Southern Region basing and force structure in a new strategic environment.

- Complete the construction of the air base at Crotone in Italy and the planned transfer of the 401st tactical fighter wing from Torrejon to Crotone; explore opportunities for periodic squadron-size deployments of the wing to new locations around the Mediterranean; review the status of COBs (colocated operating bases) in Turkey; and consider means of facilitating the rapid deployment of airpower to the region.
- Consider the creation of a mobile air defense force under NATO auspices.
- Maintain, to the extent possible, traditional levels of U.S. naval presence in the Mediterranean. To augment this presence, and to hedge against reductions, support the creation of a permanent NATO naval force in the Mediterranean; explore, with Greece and Turkey, the possibility of holding combined amphibious exercises involving other Southern Region countries as well as the United States.
- Support the formation of a multinational rapid reaction force within NATO. The creation of such a force would have direct relevance to security in the Southern Region.

- Consider the deployment of a limited U.S. or NATO ground force in Turkey if conditions on Turkey's eastern and southern borders require it. Over the longer term, and in the absence of a direct threat to Turkey's borders, political factors suggest that any permanent U.S. or allied ground presence should be held to a minimum.
- Explore the prepositioning of equipment in Turkey as a more acceptable alternative to the presence of additional ground forces. A politically attractive variation on this theme would be the division or rotation of maritime prepositioning ships between harbors in Greece and Turkey.
- As an alternative, consider reliance on stocks and forces based in the United States and the acquisition of additional airlift and sealift as a means of bolstering regional response capabilities for the Mediterranean (and everywhere else). This option would confer flexibility, but it would ignore the need for presence as a visible instrument of deterrence and reassurance in the Southern Region. Moreover, it would make no direct contribution to the reorientation of U.S. and NATO strategy to address security risks around the Mediterranean, and it would complicate the task of securing the cooperation of Southern Region countries in non-NATO contingencies.

OVERALL OBSERVATIONS

The Mediterranean is becoming more important to the security of Europe as a whole and more important to the United States as a European power. A functionally and geographically balanced approach to the basing of residual U.S. forces in Europe (i.e., maintaining an adequate presence outside central Europe) will yield distinct political and strategic advantages.

The outlook for Southern Region cooperation in non-NATO contingencies is certainly no worse than in the past (indeed, the Gulf experience provides reason for optimism), but the patterns of political acceptance are changing. With the exception of Turkey, decisions about base access, overflight, and the contribution of forces will be made in a European context. That is, such decisions will increasingly flow from a consensus among EC partners. Nonetheless, the United States and its Mediterranean allies will continue to share a strong interest in arrangements addressing security problems in an "expanding" Southern Region, whether in a NATO framework or in cooperation with other European security institutions.

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

This Note explores issues and options related to the basing of U.S. and allied forces in the Southern Region,[1] against the background of a changing strategic environment in Europe and around the Mediterranean. Two broad developments argue for greater attention to problems in the Southern Region and for new approaches to maintain or strengthen allied capabilities in the "south." First, U.S. and Alliance planning should take into account the waning of the Soviet military threat to Western Europe and the growing European concern over security and security-related problems emanating from the Mediterranean. As the Southern Region becomes more central to European security perceptions, it will become more important to the United States as a European power—and an increasingly significant consideration in shaping a relevant post–Cold War presence in Europe.

Second, the Gulf War and the continuing instability in the Middle East have focused attention on Turkey's unique position and security problems. Recent developments have both heightened Turkey's sense of vulnerability *and* raised Turkish expectations about the scope and character of defense cooperation with the United States and within NATO. It is likely that scenarios involving the reassurance and reinforcement of Turkey will play an increasingly prominent role in NATO planning.

In the following analysis, Sec. 2 explores the emerging security environment in the Southern Region, Sec. 3 highlights specific regional contingencies, Sec. 4 discusses options for Southern Region basing and force structure, and Sec. 5 offers some overall observations and conclusions.

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[1]For the purposes of this analysis, NATO's Southern Region is understood as comprising Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, and Turkey.

2. THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT IN THE SOUTHERN REGION

The security environment in the Southern Region is changing in important ways, but it is also characterized by elements of continuity and by certain political and strategic patterns distinctive within the Alliance.

ELEMENTS OF CONTINUITY

Symbolic importance of security structures and patterns of military presence. The Southern Region countries have a significant stake in maintaining current security structures and relationships. The present debate over the future of NATO is watched with concern in Southern Region capitals, not least because the outcome may have a direct effect on questions of security assistance and base access. Above all, these countries continue to place great emphasis on the symbolic value of NATO; their membership gives them a voice in political-military affairs and helps to secure their place in the Western democratic club. The latter has been of special importance for Portugal, Spain, and Greece in the wake of their democratic transitions. The symbolic importance of the Alliance connection and the bilateral security relationship with the United States is most pronounced in the case of Turkey, which lacks the important institutional alternative of the European Community.

A complex problem of "coupling" and the U.S. presence. The problem of strategic coupling—a key dilemma for European strategists throughout the period of the Cold War and beyond—has always been more complex in the Southern Region. Here the problem is not only to assure the credibility of extended deterrence across the Atlantic, but also to maintain the linkage between security in the center and in the south. As the unifying perception of a Soviet threat evaporates and as nuclear and conventional forces are reduced, these linkages will be harder to sustain. Traditionally, the presence of U.S. forces (and active American political-military involvement) has been the main factor in promoting political, strategic, and operational cohesion in the Southern Region.

The dominance of conventional strategy. Strategy in the Southern Region context has always been driven by the requirements of conventional warfare. The nuclear guarantee to Western Europe was focused overwhelmingly on the deterrence of a Warsaw Pact threat to centers of political, military, and economic importance in central rather than southern Europe (i.e., the problem was more the defense of Frankfurt than of Athens, despite their equivalence under the NATO treaty). Moreover, the traditional strategic importance of the region in East-West terms would be most pronounced in the case of a prolonged conventional war in which sea communications in the Mediterranean would be vital. To the

extent that NATO strategy in relation to the post–Cold War "eastern" threat to Europe, however minimal, is likely to be more conventional and less nuclear and to feature reinforcement (including sealift) over a longer period, the Southern Region could play a more central role. This will be of particular significance for Portugal and Spain, and the western approaches to the Mediterranean generally.

Military weakness and the persistence of traditional security assistance relationships. Portugal, Greece, and Turkey will continue to require significant security assistance, despite a growing perception (most pronounced in Portugal) that the relationship with the United States needs to be diversified and generally put on a "more mature" footing. Turkey's longstanding military modernization requirements will certainly be given even greater prominence in the wake of the Gulf War. Recent experience has already had the dual effect of heightening Turkey's sense of vulnerability and reaffirming the inadequacy of its existing armaments and forces.

Geography and infrastructure. Areas of potential conflict in the Southern Region (eastern Turkey is an excellent example) are, on the whole, characterized by difficult terrain and poor lines of land communication. This will continue to be an important consideration in developing forces and strategies relevant to contingencies in the south. These conditions also impose constraints on the mobility of potential attackers and create broad opportunities for interdiction.

Proximity to strategically vital areas beyond the Mediterranean. Even during the height of the Cold War, the countries of the Southern Region derived much of their strategic importance from their proximity to areas of crisis and potential crisis beyond the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean. The Persian Gulf/Southwest Asia region is the most obvious and enduring example, but it is not the only one. Developments in Chad, the Sudan, or sub-Saharan Africa could create the conditions for European or U.S. action (as in Zaire in 1979 and 1991) in which access to bases in southern Europe would be helpful.

A distinctive perception of threat. The Southern Region has always been characterized by a relatively diffuse perception of the Soviet threat (in this sense the Alliance as a whole is perhaps coming to resemble its Southern Region). At the same time, the region has sheltered a variety of persistent security concerns of its own, many of which are not shared by the Alliance as a whole but clearly affect U.S. and NATO interests. The continuing friction between Greece and Turkey is the most prominent example, but there are others: Spanish concerns with regard to Morocco; the Italian (and Greek) fear of instability in the Balkans; Turkey's uneasy relations with its Middle Eastern neighbors; and more recently, the broad southern European concern about immigration pressure, political

instability, and arms proliferation in North Africa. These diverse security concerns give rise to a continuing requirement for political and strategic reassurance, in which the United States—and specifically the presence of U.S. air and sea power—plays a unique role. This need, along with the requirement to deter a variety of concrete security risks emanating from North Africa and the Middle East, persists even as the demand for reassurance and deterrence in relation to Soviet power in Europe declines.

ELEMENTS OF CHANGE

The new strategic environment has changed the significance of the Southern Region for Europe and the United States. As the direct Soviet threat to Europe recedes, a range of formerly peripheral security and security-related concerns has come to the fore, and many of these concerns center on developments to the south. The shift is not simply a question of relative attention, but a reflection of the fact that current political, economic, and military developments are turning the Mediterranean into a more dangerous place. The end of the Cold War has also caused Europe to widen its definition of security, with the result that such issues as underdevelopment and demography in North Africa loom large. Strategic planners throughout the Southern Region are concerned about the prospect of security-related (i.e., political and economic) disputes becoming direct, military threats to security. Specific elements of change relevant to U.S. strategy and planning for the Southern region are described below.

The growing perception of a "threat from the south." This has two components: one political and demographic, one technical (see the next issue below). The growing disparity between an increasingly rich Europe and a poor and ever more populous North Africa has provoked considerable unease not only in Southern Europe but in Europe as a whole. The concern that exists in Europe on this point is reinforced by the recent electoral success of Islamic fundamentalists in Algeria, a resurgence of fundamentalist activity elsewhere in North Africa, and the radicalizing effect of the Gulf War. Taking these factors together, Europe is faced with a North Africa that appears to be increasingly Middle Eastern in character.

The link between arms control and security is least automatic in the Southern Region. Because large North African and Middle Eastern arsenals (and naval and naval-air forces in general) lie outside the CFE process, current arms control measures in Europe have a relatively indirect, even ambiguous effect on security in the Southern Region. This is most pronounced in the case of Turkey, given the proximity of post-CFE Soviet or independent forces behind the Urals.

Even before the Gulf War, NATO's southern allies had been voicing their concern about the proliferation of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons technology, together with the deployment of ballistic missiles and longer-range aircraft capable of delivering conventional and unconventional weapons. The missile attack on the LORAN station on Lampedusa following the U.S. air strike against Libya in April 1986 gave early warning of this trend, and the Iraqi employment of SCUD missiles has strongly reinforced existing concerns. The proliferation of advanced and unconventional technologies has significant implications for the future of U.S. security relations around the Mediterranean, affecting the perceptions of allies and potential adversaries alike. In this context, the SCUD experience raises questions about the vulnerability of Crotone and major population centers in southern Italy in the event of operations against Libya or Algeria. Although Italian views on the desirability of the Crotone base remain essentially unchanged, the potentially inhibiting effect of the ballistic missile threat needs to be taken into account in assessing the prospects for access in non-NATO contingencies. (To be sure, the presence of the 401st tactical fighter wing at Crotone will also be an instrument of deterrence.) Overall, the ballistic missile threat, and the problem of air defense in general, is likely to be at the top of the agenda in considering new defense arrangements in the Southern Region.

A more European Southern Region: implications for base access. The countries of NATO's Southern Region (with the important exception of Turkey) are becoming increasingly European in their outlook. This holds considerable importance for the United States in relation to questions of base access, overflight rights, and defense cooperation in general. It is becoming less and less likely that individual Southern Region countries (Portugal is the most important example) will adopt a stance on access in non-NATO contingencies that is at variance with their European partners. In cases where there is a broad consensus on cooperation, as in the recent Gulf experience, this trend can play a positive role. But in many potential contingencies, future air operations against Libya, for example, there may be no such consensus.

This is not to say that the prospects for U.S. access to facilities for non-NATO purposes are worsening. The prevailing uncertainty with regard to future security structures and relationships in Europe has given the Southern Region countries a pronounced interest in promoting the transatlantic dimension of their security policies. This is most obvious in the case of Turkey, visible in Portugal, and, with the shift to a conservative government and concern about the new attention being given to Turkey, increasingly evident in Greece. The Gulf crisis produced surprisingly extensive cooperation across the Southern Region. Elements of a new approach to cooperation with the United States can even be seen in Spain

(together with Greece, traditionally the most sensitive of the southern allies on base issues), where extensive use was made of facilities at Rota, Torrejon and Moron.[1] At the same time, the crisis reaffirmed a clear preference among the Southern Region countries for placing potentially controversial initiatives in a multilateral context.

Force modernization. Across the Southern Region, there is a strong interest in modernizing the structure and equipment of the armed forces, accompanied by a general reorientation of strategy and missions southward, a trend most pronounced in Spain and Italy. The experience of the Gulf War has had the effect of redoubling Turkish interest in the modernization of its large and largely obsolete forces. At the same time, there continues to be a strong political interest, especially in Spain and Portugal, in providing the armed forces with a professional *external* mission, preferably within the NATO context. These countries are likely to be in a good position to contribute to the formation of new, multilateral rapid response forces.[2]

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[1]The use of the latter for B-52 operations against Iraq might have been expected to provoke a political crisis, but in the event the reaction was relatively mild.

[2]Both Spain and Italy have been developing national "rapid intervention forces" on the pattern of the French Force d'Action Rapide (FAR), which could provide prompt reinforcement in defense of the Canaries, Ceuta and Melilla, or the Italian islands. The problem of adequate "lift" for these forces remains.

3. REGIONAL CONTINGENCIES: AN EXPANDING SOUTHERN REGION?

Taken together, the political and strategic developments outlined above suggest a movement toward what a number of southern European analysts are describing as an "expanding Southern Region." This is a strategic environment in which potential contingencies stretching from the Atlantic approaches to the Mediterranean through the Suez Canal to the Gulf will affect the security future of the Southern Region, as well as defense relationships with the United States. Below we examine the range of possible scenarios and missions for U.S. forces in the region.

A residual eastern threat to the Southern Region. Contingencies involving the Soviet Union—or former Soviet Union—could take two forms, the first of which might flow from a Russian attempt to re-enter Eastern Europe, posing a threat to Germany and Europe as a whole. In this very remote case, Russian forces might try to interfere with sea lines of communication in the Mediterranean or the Atlantic approaches, or to launch a preemptive thrust toward Thrace and the Turkish straits in order to deny Allied naval forces access to the Black Sea. A contingency of this sort would create reinforcement requirements on the pattern of traditional NATO planning for the defense of Thrace. The creation of new rapid response forces within NATO, together with the completion of the Crotone air base, would significantly strengthen the Allied capacity to meet this class of threat.

Second, further instability in the southern Soviet republics, or the further disintegration of the Soviet Union itself, could create a dangerous situation in the Balkans and along the Turkish-Soviet border. In the latter case, and in extreme circumstances, it might prove difficult for Turkey to remain aloof from turmoil in largely Turkic Azerbaijan. Even if Turkish forces are not engaged, the potential for large-scale refugee flows will remain. Humanitarian or peacekeeping operations could require a significant U.S. presence (perhaps between one and three divisions) as well as the provision of logistical assistance to Turkish forces.[1]

The defense of Turkey against regional aggression. Syrian support for Kurdish separatists operating in southeastern Turkey, against a background of disputes over water and territory and a legacy of resentment dating from the Ottoman experience, could lead to a confrontation between Syria and Turkey.[2] Friction over developments in oil-rich Kurdistan

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[1]Force estimates are offered for illustrative purposes only.

[2]Syria harbors territorial claims on Iskenderun and Antioch, and it has alleged that Turkey intends to restrict the flow of Euphrates water through the Ataturk Dam, part of Turkey's Southeast

(with its important Turkish minority) could also spark an armed conflict between Turkey and Iran and/or Syria. A revived and rearmed Iraq would pose an obvious threat to Turkish interests in the region.

The defense of Turkey would impose very significant ground, air, and sea reinforcement requirements on NATO (perhaps three to five divisions, ten or more tactical fighter wings, and several carrier battle groups). Prepositioning equipment afloat or ashore could facilitate deployments and bolster deterrence, but its utility would vary enormously depending upon the source of aggression and the location of stocks (e.g., equipment prepositioned afloat at Izmir might be of little use for contingencies in eastern Anatolia, whereas stocks at Iskenderun could make an important contribution in countering a Syrian attack).

Conflict between Greece and Turkey. Although neither Ankara nor Athens appears to have any rational interest in provoking an armed conflict, the problem of crisis management in the eastern Mediterranean remains complex and unpredictable. While resource and air/sea space issues in the Aegean are amenable to discourse between governments, and there have even been tentative signs of movement on the volatile Cyprus question, ethnic disputes involving the Moslem minority in Greek Thrace could prove to be a serious source of conflict for the future.

In the event of conflict, U.S. and European NATO forces could be called upon to play a peacekeeping role, requiring a multidivision presence and specialized air support. Operations aimed at stabilizing a conflict between two NATO allies would obviously demand extraordinary sensitivity and coordination. The most important role for U.S. forces in the eastern Mediterranean in this context will continue to be the maintenance of a visible and stabilizing presence, contributing to confidence on both sides.

Instability or conflict in the Balkans. Continuing civil war in Yugoslavia and the large refugee flows this might yet produce in the Adriatic region, conflict between Romania and Hungary over Transylvania, or between Turkey and Bulgaria over the status of the Turkish minority—and this is hardly a comprehensive list of Balkan contingencies—could lead to peacekeeping efforts (or active intervention in the case of a Bulgarian-Turkish clash) in which U.S. forces might play a role. Balkan scenarios could impose multidivision force requirements with appropriate air support. Yugoslav scenarios might well involve naval and amphibious operations in which Italian and other allied f[illegible]es could be expected to play a leading role.

Anatolia Project. Syrian SCUD B and SS-21 missiles are a particular concern given the proximity of Turkish population centers in the south to the Syrian border.

Defense of the Suez Canal. Although Middle Eastern contingencies are not the focus of this Note, the issue of access to the Suez Canal is worth noting because of its essential role in linking the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean theaters. Given the likelihood of a continuing requirement for a substantial naval presence in the Persian Gulf, the ability to maintain an adequate presence in both regions and to shift forces rapidly in response to circumstances will depend on unimpeded access to the Suez Canal. It is likely that instability in Egypt that might threaten Western access to the canal will be an important contingency for planning in an "expanded" Southern Region. Requirements in this case could range from limited ground forces with specialized air support (to secure the canal against civil unrest) to substantial joint operations designed to wrest control of the canal from a hostile regime. Further specialized operations might be required to clear the canal and its approaches of mines and obstacles.

Instability or conflict involving North Africa. The conditions described in relation to the growing European concern about security and security-related problems to the south could produce a variety of contingencies. One class of scenarios would involve south-south conflicts in which U.S. and European forces might be called upon to intervene (e.g., in defense of Egypt, Tunisia, or possibly Morocco should a fundamentalist regime with international ambitions come to power in Algeria). Other contingencies would include a response to state-sponsored terrorism; preemptive or retaliatory action in response to an air or missile attack on European territory or shipping; and strikes against chemical or nuclear facilities in Libya or Algeria.[3]

A Moroccan threat to Ceuta and Melilla. The risk of a Moroccan attempt to seize Ceuta and Melilla has received limited attention in U.S. and European circles, but it is arguably the leading planning scenario for Spanish forces.[4] Although the Spanish enclaves on the Moroccan coast opposite Gibraltar are outside the NATO area (this is not true of the small islands just offshore), the Spanish government is firmly committed to their defense and might request U.S. and European support on a bilateral basis in the event of a crisis.[5] The potential scope of a clash over the enclaves is greater than political geography suggests, as a practical defense of Melilla would require the seizure of a substantial defensive perimeter on

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[3]During the Gulf crisis, the possibility of an Iraqi missile attack on the Canaries or elsewhere from launchers in Mauretania was a concern in Spain and Portugal.

[4]The risk of Moroccan action is probably limited under current circumstances, but a post-Hassan regime, possibly with fundamentalist or strong nationalist leanings, might see a political opportunity in threatening the enclaves. Indeed, Spain took action to reinforce the enclaves during the Gulf crisis, in which Spanish support for American air operations inflamed Moroccan opinion.

[5]Few Spanish observers are sanguine about the prospects for European or American support, especially in the event of a "peaceful" occupation of the enclaves.

Moroccan soil. Moreover, a Spanish-Moroccan conflict could radicalize opinion and behavior elsewhere in North Africa. Naval and air power, together with logistical assistance, would be the key elements in operations designed to support Spanish forces. The political costs of American involvement would be large, and possibly prohibitive.

4. OPTIONS FOR SOUTHERN REGION BASING AND FORCES

The following are offered as options for consideration in relation to Southern Region basing and force structure in a new strategic environment. They are not intended as strict alternatives—in many cases they are complementary—but limitations on resources as well as political capital at home and abroad may well preclude undertaking more than a few initiatives in the region.

AIR

Complete the Crotone base. A strong case can be made on political, strategic, and operational grounds that completion of the facilities at Crotone in Italy would be the most important new contribution the United States could make to security in the Mediterranean.[1] The transfer of the 401st TFW from Torrejon to Crotone, maintaining a U.S. ground-based tactical air presence in the Southern Region, has great political and strategic significance for NATO's southern allies. Even more important is the facility itself, which might serve a variety of joint and combined operations. Apart from its role as a base for the 401st, and with the provision of appropriate features, Crotone could support the deployment of bombers, tankers, transports, and the management of intelligence and special-purpose airpower across a broad range of contingencies in the Mediterranean and beyond.[2]

Budgetary constraints on naval forces, the reduction of the overall U.S. military presence in Europe, and the need for NATO to reorient its security concerns all reinforce the value of Crotone. The combination of land-based airpower and carrier and other naval assets in the Mediterranean has an important synergistic effect on presence and operations. Diversified operations at Crotone would reduce some of the risk inherent in having periodically to withdraw a carrier battle group from the Mediterranean to perform missions elsewhere (e.g., in the Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean).

From the perspective of the Southern Region countries, the presence of the 401st TFW at Crotone is important since it provides tangible evidence of a geographically and functionally balanced U.S. commitment to Europe in a period of strategic flux; is a notable example of alliance burdensharing and a promising vehicle for multinational activities; contributes to the deterrence of and defense against threats arising from the south; plays a

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[1]See Ian Lesser and Kevin N. Lewis, *Airpower and Security in NATO's Southern Region: Alternative Concepts for a USAF Facility at Crotone,* N-3264-AF, RAND, 1991.

[2]Such operations, outside the NATO context, would of course require Italian approval.

specific political reassurance role in relation to Turkey; and provides an affordable hedge against reductions in U.S. and/or allied naval strength in the Mediterranean. Finally, with regard to the 401st TFW, as well as other U.S. military forces in the Southern Region, it will be more difficult to enlist the cooperation of the southern allies (in future Middle Eastern contingencies, for example) if we reduce forces devoted to their defense.

As an interim step, consider keeping some portion of the 401st TFW in Turkey while the Crotone base is completed. An extended rotation to Turkey would satisfy at least part of the interim basing problem and serve useful political and strategic objectives. Turkish attitudes in the wake of the October 1991 elections will clearly be the leading constraint, but there should not be any formal bar if measures taken to override Turkish constitutional restrictions on the "permanent" basing of foreign combat forces remain in place. For preference, this should be a NATO initiative in order to minimize Turkish sovereignty concerns. These concerns might still prove prohibitive.

Explore opportunities for periodic squadron-size deployments of the 401st TFW to new locations around the Mediterranean. Candidates would include Crete (this would provide useful balance) and Cyprus (Akrotiri). Given the rapidly evolving situation in Europe, brief deployments to France might not be out of the question in the future.

Review the status of COBs (colocated operating bases) in Turkey, and consider means of facilitating the rapid deployment of airpower to the region. Particular emphasis should be given to the availability of adequate command, control, and communications assets and logistics to support deployments in eastern and southeastern Anatolia.

Consider the creation of a "mobile air defense force" under NATO auspices. The establishment of a multinational unit using existing air and ballistic missile defense assets would be politically and militarily attractive given the recent experience in the Gulf and the resulting concern in southern Europe. Such a move might also help allay allied concerns about the growing capacity for Maghrebi and Middle Eastern retaliation in the case of operations from Southern European or Turkish bases.

MARITIME

Maintain, to the extent possible, traditional levels of U.S. naval presence in the Mediterranean. Ideally, the conditions detailed elsewhere in this Note would suggest the maintenance of a substantial Sixth Fleet presence in the Mediterranean. During the Gulf crisis, and for the first time in decades, the Mediterranean was without a U.S. carrier

battle group. Continuing demands on naval forces in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean will almost certainly come at the expense of the battle group presence in the Mediterranean.

Even in the absence of a carrier battle group, the United States will still have significant naval and amphibious power at its disposal in the Mediterranean. The performance of the Tomahawk cruise missile in the Gulf, together with the fact that the future will see more of these conventionally armed systems present on U.S. ships in the Mediterranean, is a development that potential aggressors will have to reckon with. Although this is a positive contribution to deterrence, it cannot fully offset a decline in the carrier presence. The essential point is that periodic absences of the carrier battle group from the Mediterranean should be held to a minimum.

To augment the U.S. naval and air presence in the region, and to hedge against reductions, support the creation of a permanent NATO naval force in the Mediterranean. The standing force would replace the Naval On-Call Force, and it could be well suited to limited contingencies (peacekeeping missions in the Aegean or the Adriatic, for example) and furthering naval presence generally. Although Allied forces cannot readily fill the gap left by the absence of a U.S. carrier battle group—French, Italian, and Spanish carriers are designed primarily for the antisubmarine role, and allied navies in general are not oriented toward power projection—a standing NATO force could still make a significant contribution, even under more demanding scenarios. The habits of cooperation developed through standing force exercises would also facilitate operations in non-NATO contingencies.

Explore, with Greece and Turkey, the possibility of holding combined amphibious exercises involving other Southern Region countries as well as the United States. This could be done under the rubric of a Permanent Naval Force Mediterranean. The political obstacles inherent in developing new cooperative schemes in the Aegean, while formidable, should not prevent exploratory efforts. The United States may well enjoy greater freedom of action in this regard as both Greece and Turkey seek to promote secure relations across the Atlantic after the Cold War.

LAND

Continue to support the formation of a multinational Rapid Reaction Force within NATO. The creation of such a force would be of particular value in the Southern Region context. Specifically, it would build on existing rapid intervention initiatives in Spain and Italy; be well suited to the variety of contingencies and difficult terrain that characterize the Mediterranean theater; give a new and relevant role to smaller forces in the Southern Region (for example, to replace the Portuguese commitment to the reinforcement of northeast

Italy, which has become irrelevant); and to provide a NATO context for a range of potential deployments that might be less acceptable if undertaken on a bilateral basis.

Consider the deployment of a limited U.S. or NATO ground force in Turkey (brigade strength?) only if conditions on Turkey's eastern and southern borders and Turkish policy encourage it. The permanent deployment of U.S. ground forces in Turkey could incite strong political opposition and exacerbate growing Turkish sovereignty concerns. It might also be a source of worry in Moscow and the southern republics that we may not wish to foster. Moreover, a permanent deployment would restrict U.S. freedom of action to the extent that forces installed in Turkey would be difficult to move elsewhere (including the Gulf). On balance, and in the absence of a direct threat on Turkey's borders, a permanent ground presence should be avoided or held to the minimum.

Pursue the prepositioning of equipment (perhaps for an armor-heavy brigade) in Turkey. A more acceptable alternative to the permanent basing of additional ground forces in Turkey (or anywhere in the Southern Region) would be the placement of substantial prepositioned stocks ashore or afloat—or some combination of the two. Prepositioning afloat, at Izmir or Iskenderun, would confer certain advantages in flexibility and political acceptance. For contingencies in eastern Anatolia, however, the existence of prepositioned equipment on the Mediterranean coast would be of doubtful value. A politically difficult but potentially useful variation on this theme would be the division or rotation of maritime prepositioning ships between appropriate harbors in Greece and Turkey.

As a broad alternative, consider reliance on central stocks in the continental U.S. and the acquisition of additional airlift and fast sealift as a means of bolstering regional response capabilities for the Mediterranean (and everywhere else). This option confers great strategic flexibility, but it does little to satisfy the need for presence as a visible deterrent and an instrument of reassurance around the Southern Region. Moreover, it would make no direct contribution to the reorientation of NATO strategy and forces in response to the changing security environment in and around Europe.

5. OVERALL OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

NATO's Southern Region is a center of existing and emerging security risks, and the Mediterranean itself is becoming more important to the security of Europe as a whole—and more important to the United States as a European power. A functionally and geographically balanced approach to the basing of residual U.S. forces in Europe will yield distinct political and strategic advantages. In this context, maintaining military capability in the Southern Region will contribute to a *relevant* post–Cold War presence in Europe; hedge against political uncertainties with regard to bases in Germany; counter "singularization" concerns within the Alliance; and contribute to deterrence and defense in areas of strategic importance beyond the Mediterranean littoral.

The outlook for U.S. access to Southern Region bases is certainly no worse than in the past—the Persian Gulf experience even provides grounds for optimism—but the patterns of political acceptance in relation to non-NATO contingencies are changing. Above all, and with the important exception of Turkey, decisions about base access and other forms of cooperation are increasingly made in a European context.

Finally, the United States and its Mediterranean allies will continue to share a strong interest in forces and arrangements capable of addressing security problems in an "expanding" Southern Region, the former because of its global interests and the latter because of their proximity to centers of risk. It is therefore likely that important new initiatives in this area will be possible within NATO or in cooperation with other European-based security institutions.